ਚਿਤ੍ਰਾਵਲੀ

Chitravali

Masterpieces of BHAI GIAN SINGH,
the Versatile Artist
of the Sikh School.

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OPINIONS ON GIAN CHITRAVALI

FROM DIGNITARIES

1. ..."It is very well got up, and I hope it will help to popularise the work of the Late Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash."

S. Radha Krishnan
(Vice-President of India)

2. ..."Some of the pictures are very good, and I congratulate you on publishing this beautiful album."

K. M. Munshi
(Governor, Uttar Pradesh)

3. ..."All the paintings and specimens of Fresco work, prepared by him (Bhai Gian Singh), pulsate with all the qualities, which will perpetuate his Art. "Gian Chitravali" is an invaluable collection of beautiful paintings of taste..."

K.B. Abdul-Rehman Chughtai
(State Artist, West Pakistan, Lahore)

4. ...Sardar Gian Singh had done work of a highly artistic nature... His decorations in Mohra Qashi are a work of skilled craftsmanship. His paintings have also an imaginative quality... I am glad that an authoritative book on the work of Bhai Gian Singh 'Naqqash' has been brought out and I hope it will be appreciated by all lovers of art..."

M. S. Randhawa, I. C. S.
Vice President,
(Indian Council of Agricultural Research)

5. ..."The publication of "Gian Chitravali" is an important event, because it brings together the floral and other designs of Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash, which form a link between the remnants of the Sikh School of painting and the present day practitioners of arts and crafts. Like many other craftsmen of our country, this modest, un-assuming personality continued a tradition which will inspire the younger Artists..."

Mulk Raj Anand
(Editor, "Marg" Bombay)

6. ..." S. Gian Singh's art has its own charm and its own unique style, which can be the result of only continuous, intelligent hard work and experience ... I congratulate my friend S. Sohan Singh for having made his art available to the people ... "

Gurdial Singh Dhillon,
(Speaker, Punjab Assembly)

7. ..." S. Gian Singh's versatile genius has left its mark and he will be remembered as a Master Artist, whenever the works of Punjab Artists of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's School of Art are appreciated. His imaginative fantacies are delicate, subtle and without an equal or parallel... The work will serve as a beacon-light to artists all over and particularly to the young Punjabi Artists..."

Kirpa Ram B. A., LL. B.
(Advocate, Amritsar)

8. ..."This collection of some of the works of the late Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash, the last of the great masters of the Sikh School of fresco-painting, should rank among the very good art reproductions of our country..."

Gurbachan Singh Talib
(Principal, Lyallpur Kh. College, Jullundur)

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GIAN CHITRAVALI

MASTERPIECES OF THE

Late Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash

(The versatile Master of the Sikh School of Art.)

With a Foreword by

S. G. THAKUR SINGH, Ex-M. L. C.

President,

THE INDIAN ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS.

1956

Produced & Published by

G. S. SOHAN SINGH, *(Artist)*

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Foreword

AESTHETIC sensibility is the touch-stone of the Cultural advancement of a nation. This sensibility reveals itself in and through the Social, Moral, Religious and other facets of the life of the people.

The arts of the Punjab soared high in the people's approach to life under the patronising affection of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Sikh School of Art, founded by him, introduced novel values in the realisation of the beautiful. This school contributed rich contours and colours to the religious and administrative monuments of the time, and ultimately gave its very best to the Golden Temple at Amritsar, which is the palpable, solidified shape of the æsthetic devotion of the artists concerned, and a unique gem of their offering to God.

The late Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash, who was the last of the line of those devoted artists, proverbially identified himself with the service of the Temple in various ways, and worked there continuously for 32 years in all humility.

It is a matter of fortunate gratification that a number of his original paintings on imaginative, decorative and other subjects are still available, and his worthy son Shri G. S. Sohan Singh has made a commendable effort in bringing out this volume, reproducing some of the late Bhai ji's works, which, it is hoped, will go a long way in reviving an almost neglected, but highly cultivated art.

S. G. Thakur Singh,
President,
THE INDIAN ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS,
Amritsar.

Dated 30-1-56.

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Acknowledgements

THE zealous efforts put in by the late Giani Harinder Singh 'Roop', the well-known poet and writer, and S. Gurbachan Singh, 'Talib', Principal, Layalpur Khalsa College, Jullundur, for convening an Exhibition of the paintings and other works of the late Bhai Gian Singh, towards the end of 1953, at Jullundur, brought, before thousands of discerning people, a pagant of their own rich cultural heritage. The success of the Exhibition, and appreciation of the works displayed therein, generated the idea of publishing some of the paintings.

This was verily an up-hill task, requiring considerable application, both mental and physical, as also involving difficult anticipations.

The selfless efforts and kindly guidance from Shri P. Verma, B. A., L. C. C. (London), making rich contributions of æsthetico - literary text to suit the particular subject, and suggesting valuable devices for beautifying this volume — have gone a long way in solving some of the major difficulties facing the undersigned. The production of this book may have remained almost an improbability for a considerable time but for the gratuitous practical interest taken by him. Shri J. R. Verma, M. A., Professor, Government College, Ludhiana, very kindly went through large portions of the text, and gave some useful hints for bringing the volume in proper shape.

Pandit Kirpa Ram Advocate has, from time to time, been giving plenty of impetus for the revival of the Arts of the Punjab, and this has always been valued by the writer.

The affectionate encouragement given to the producer, and the keen personal attention to details during the course of printing, on the part of S. Niranjan Singh, Proprietor, Punjabee Press, Amritsar (Pb.), kept up the tone of production. Shri Sunder Dass Oberoi, formerly of the Punjabee Press, also gave occasional tips on production technique.

The undersigned expresses his heart-felt gratitude to these esteemed friends.

Any suggestions from the readers for further improvements in the volume will be cordially accepted.

G. S. SOHAN SINGH

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CONTENTS

THE ARTIST : A Glimpse of his Life.

The Technique of Fresco-Painting and Allied Arts.

Plates with Notes

Plate 1. DEHIN

Plate 2. TYPES OF IRRELIGION

Plate 3. THE INVITING DOOM

Plate 4. DEHIN

Plate 5. AQUATIC HARMONY

Plate 6. SAMADHI

Plate 7. ELEPHANT FIGHT

Plate 8. FLOWER PATTERNS

Plate 9. PATTHA

Plate 10. DEHIN JARATKARI

Plate 11. MEMORIES OF HOMELAND

Plate 12. DEHIN TUKRI

Plate 13. FLORAL SQUARE

Plate 14. THE VENGEANCE

Plate 15. THE PILGRIM

Plate 16. GHARVANJH

Plate 17. THE ETERNAL STRIFE

Plate 18. FLOWER VASE

Plate 19. THE EFFECT OF AGE

Plate 20. CAMEL FIGHT

Plate 21. LETTER OF THANKS

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The vision of beauty is spontaneous, in just the same sense as the inward light of the lover (bhakta). It is a state of grace that cannot be achieved by deliberate effort; though perhaps we can remove hindrances to its manifestation, for there are many witnesses that the secret of all art is to be found in self-forgetfulness. And we know that this state of grace is not achieved in the pursuit of pleasure; the hedonists have their reward, but they are in bondage to loveliness, while the artist is free in beauty.

("The dance of Shiva" by Ananda Coomaraswamy)

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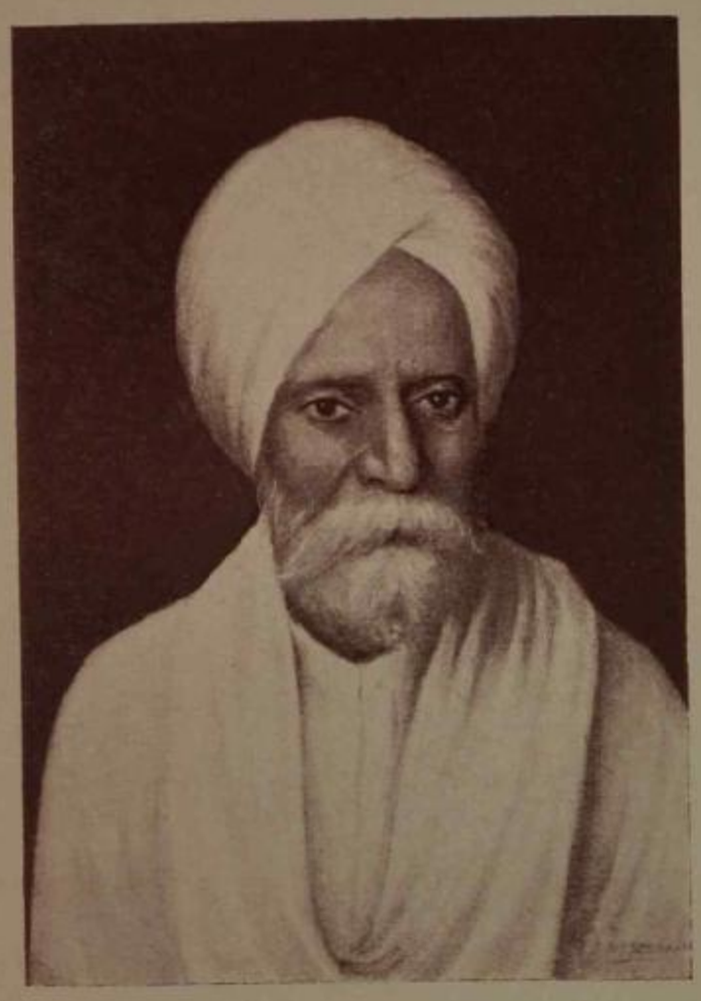
THE ARTIST

A glimpse of his life.



The late Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash
Born 1883. Died 1953.

Bhai Gian Singh belonged to the line of Naqqashes started by Bhai Kehar Singh, who enjoyed royal patronage under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Bhai Kehar Singh had two nephews, Bhai Kishan Singh and Bhai Bishan Singh, wno turned out to be great artists in Fresco-Painting in their time. Bhai Bishan Singh had two sons, Bhai Nihal Singh and Bhai Jawahar Singh, who followed in the footsteps of their father. Bhai Gian Singh was the loyal disciple of these two masters. Bhai Gian Singh was an expert in Fresco-painting. He served in the Golden Temple, Amritsar for about 32 years.

In recognition of his meritorious services, he was endowed with the rare grant of a Siropa by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, in the year 1949.

Through years of continuous, practical study of the subject, Bhai ji introduced a number of innovations in Fresco-painting.

He was a saintly soul, who believed in quietly, almost un-obstrusively offering his artistic creations at the feet of his Creator — the Supreme artist, and was, in no way, less than a selfless devotee (Nishkam Karma Yogi). He was endowed with almost supernatural capabilities, and worked on his delicate subjects without glassess throughout his life.

Some of his paintings are in possession of men in high state in the religious and political field.

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With his demise the curtain was finally dropped on the time-hallowed school of Naqqashes, which had been started by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and had presented to the people a vision of the cumulative life of the Punjab in its varied aspects — human, floral, zoological etc.

His worthy son, G. S. Sohan Singh, is honestly following the celebrated footsteps of his late father in the field of Art Endeavour.

Bhai Gian Singh's works, immortalised on the walls, roofs and corridors of the Golden Temple, Amritsar, will go down to posterity as a chaste legacy – atonce a tribute to the sublime ideas of the artist, as also an eloquent testimony to the mysterious depths attained in Art.

Due to long association with the Golden Temple, Bhai ji had developed a philosophical approach towords life, and was well – versed in the recitation and interpretation of the verses from the Holy Guru Granth Sahib. A number of books on religious and aesthetic subjects were published by him for the good of general public. A true religious humanist, he loved all and hated none. Non-violence was the bed-rock of his beliefs.

His name will reverberate through the corridors of time as of a gifted soul inspired by the lofty ideals of the True, the Good and the Beautiful (सत्यं, शिवं, सुन्दरम्).

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The technique of Fresco-Painting

(MOHRA QASHI)

The technique of Fresco-painting, through the various stages of its execution, caters for the ever-lasting durability of the finest details and secures them against the ravages of time. It requires prompt attention to minutia, and is born out of the concentrated efforts, both physical and mental, on the part of the Artist.

The sequence to be painted is originally drawn in pencil or charcoal on a sheet of reasonably thick paper. The entire drawing is then perforated : care being taken to see that perforation is even and perfect. The perforated drawing is called "Khaka".

To start off, one square foot of the brickwork on the even wall is made, and kept, wet to requirement by continuous sprinkling of water. Thereafter the area is plastered with lime (this plaster is called "Pora"). On this plaster is cast a layer of "Doga", the curd-like residue of white plaster prepared from burnt and drenched marble duly cloth-filtered. Before casting "Doga", the "Pora" is plastered with the rough remains, called "Kutta", of white marble plaster, from the cloth-filtered material. This makes the lime plaster stronger as well as whiter than its original condition. When the Doga is yet wet, the drawing is cast on the area by means of charcoal dust sprinkled, from cloth-knots (called "Potli"), on and through the perforated drawing contacting the plaster. Immediately thereafter (the ground being still wet) colours are distributed in the different planes of the drawing transferred on the plaster. The colours are then set into the plaster by means of a small wooden showel, (called Nehla) with slight hunch in the middle. This showel is kept constantly thumping gently on the wet plaster manually. This process requires un-abated attention, and artists are known to have generally gone without meals to ensure the setting in of colours before the plaster dried up.

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Once these original colours are thus established, further colour-coatings are gone into for bringing out details, giving tones to the required planes and for imparting the final touches to the painting. This entire operation requires that the area is definitely wet throughout as a pre-requisite.

The colours used in fresco-paintings are not the ones now popularly known as water-colours, or the tubed oil-colours. These latter colours can hardly stand the test of time. The fresco-colours are specially prepared for this particular kind of job, as described below :-

(a) RED — This is prepared from an indigenous clay called "Hurmachi". It comes down generally from hill-areas, and is available with grocers. It is pulverised by constant rubbing with water on stone slabs The intensity of redness always depends upon the fineness of the pulverised clay.

(b) BLACK — This is prepared from burnt cocoanut crust in the same way as described above.

(c) GREEN— The source of this colour is a sort of green stone, called *"sang-i-sabz."* Small chips of this stone are pulverised with water.

(d) YELLOW-- This colour is obtained from yellow clay, and is of an exceptionally charming hue, requiring plenty of strain in the making.

(e) BLUE— This is a mixture of ultramarine with process glue.

(f) WHITE— Burnt marble chips are drenched in water (like lime-stone). The mixture is then filtered. The curd like substance thus settled is put to use. This is also called "Doga".

All the other colours, excepting green, are toned up or otherwise by mixing white colour. Green is treated with yellow clay.

Colours required for use in Fresco-painting are always kept wet with water in earthen receptacles. Dried up colours are no use.

Similarly the brushes are prepared by the Artists themselves from squirrel tail or goat and camel hair for use in Fresco-painting.

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OTHER ALLIED ARTS

GACH WORK– Gach is a sort of stone (Gypsm). This is pounded and fried in a pan. During the course of frying, the standard of its heat-treatment is tested by mixing small quantities of water. When the desired results are achieved, the material is put to use. It is further prepared, by mixing in water, only in such limited quantities as the Artist can at a time make use of (because immediately on drying up in a minute or two, it becomes stone again, and is not fit for use then). This Gach is first applied like lime, then it is shaved with steel cutters and other implements and fashioned out in floral designs, while still in a semi-wet stage. After the entire design is dry, it is covered with yellow colour mixed with varnish and then pasted over with gold leaves (Varaqs).

This sort of work can be seen in plenty in the first storey of the Golden Temple, Amritsar, [Main Shrine] over the Hari-ki-Pauri. Verses from the Guru Granth Sahib have been rendered in this style by Bhai Gian Singh.

TUKRI WORK– Tukri work involves the setting in of the pieces (***Tukries***) of glass of sizes in the Gach work. This style was very popular with the Moghul artistocracy. It received sufficient patronage from the Sikh Chiefs also.

Gach work is cut out into various designs, and is then inlaid with coloured glass, mirror-glass, gold leaves etc. Normal glass is based generally an coloured frosted copper.

Original thin glass pots are polished on the inside with mercury. (This glass is called Pachhi-ka-Sheesha). These are then broken and the pieces cut to sizes with the help of the sharp edge of special stone, called ***krund***, to suit the floral and other details cut out from Gach work. At places precious stones are also set in the cuts.

Buildings containing such work are generally called ***Sheesh Mahal*** or glass houses (see plate 12).

JARATKARI WORK [Munavat] – Jaratkari work involves the in-laying of coloured stone in marble. This art is also a legacy of the Naqqashes. The Artist prepares the drawing, andtransfers the drawing from the paper on to the slab. This drawing is then made pacca by the Naqqash. The marble Stone-Dresser (Pathar Ghara) engraves the required depths in the marble slab. The original drawing

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complete with colour scheme, is given by the Naqqash, to the coloured stone dresser (called *"Begaria"*) for cutting patterns from multi-coloured stones. These patterns are then set in the slab by the Pathar Ghara.

The following stones are generally used in Jaratkari :-

(a) Haqique – Red and pink shade. (b) Zehir Mohra – Green.
(c) Khattu Pathar – Yellow. (d) Sabaz Pathar (Ghaar) – Dark Green.
(e) Sabaz Pathar (Nargis) – Green. (f) Sang Yashap – Green, Light Green, White & Blue.
(g) Sang Pasham – Light Green. (h) Lajward – Ultramarine. (i) Black Marble.
(j) Arabic Smak – Light Black, and other various kinds of stones.

Special stones in natural colours, to suit the subject – (with the necessary fibrous and other textures) – are cut out by hand with considerable effort and with the help of special implements, to fit in the carvings in marble slabs. Coloured stone of considerable size has to be cut and re-cut for fashioning out the required pattern. (See Plate 10)

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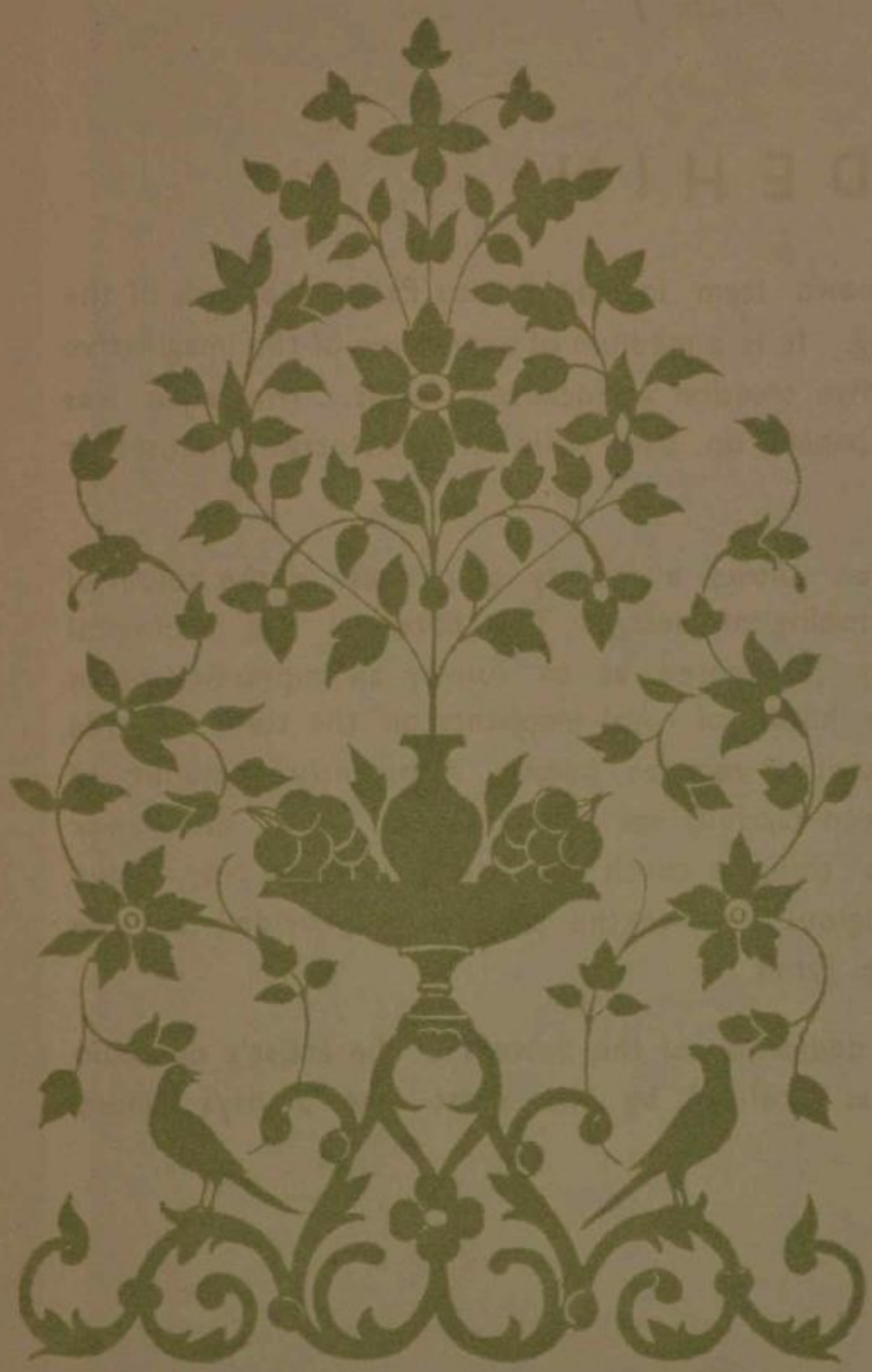

DEHIN

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Plate 1

DEHIN

DEHIN is a well-known item in the Fresco Painting branch of the Sikh School of Painting. It is a medium of expression of the imaginative study of the artist's own creation of idealized forms. The style was generally used in decorative panels on the walls of artistocratic houses or religious buidings.

The present reproduction shows a variety of richness in the colourful representation of floral and zoological design. The botanical and zoological symbols have been dexterously juxtaposed as to convey an impression of an organised integeral whole. The heads of royal elephants on the sides provide an appropriate balance to the knotted reptiles below. Apparently symbolic of power, these creatures have been tactfully set against tender leaves and flower patterns, thus giving the whole thing a touch of lyrical strength : a unique feature in Art expression. Religious tinge to the picture is provided by the inset of the Gurudwara at Tarn Taran.

The picture is a sincere dedication of the flowers of the artist's devotion to his diety. (This design was finalised by the artist just 5 days before his demise).

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TYPES OF IRRELIGION

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TYPES OF IRRELIGION

THE picture is a piquant satire on the profane mental working of some of the 'religious' acrobats. Under the protecting shadow of religion, which they use as a comouflage over their bestial instincts, these 'saviours' indulge in all sorts of vile practices and succeed in duping the innocent masses for a considerable time at least.

Their lust for sex is as maddening as that in an elephant. They are worse gluttons than a bull. Their greed and un-couth habits eclipse these attributes even in a crow. They would not mind pinching and wearing others' apparel to perform a "devotional dance" in a fool-hardy manner like an ass, and ruining their kith and kin for un-warranted personal gains – and style this latter action of theirs as a gigantic sacrifice, before others. Their bitter pills of hypocricy sugared-over with a thin 'religious' coat, and administered unto the general public have been responsible for social cancers of the worst type from time to time.

The picture is based on Kabir Sahib's well-known complet :

"Pheel Rababi, Bald Pakhawaj Kauva tal bajave,
Pehar cholna Gadha nache, Bhainsa bhagat karawe."

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THE INVITING DOOM

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Plate 3

THE INVITING DOOM

IN an atmosphere of intensified gloom, the grave offers an embracing invitation to the old age : a picture of mystic reality !

The crescent moon, the scanning owl, the waving bats, the pendant branch of the tree, the drooping character of old age and the semi-visible inviting hands of the grave—all placed under the blanket of nocturnal darkness, give a dreamy touch to the picture.

The reaction of tottering age to the inevitable destiny looming before it and beckoning it, is evidently writ large on the face. The residue of life on *this* side obviously welcomes the prospect of a journey *beyond*, with a faint longing for Eternal Salvation.

The picture is based on Baba Farid's verse :
(*"Farida gore nimani sadkare..."*), from the Holy Guru Granth Sahib.

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DEHIN

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Plate 4

DEHIN

ANOTHER representation of the popular item in the Fresco style of the Sikh School of Art. The motifs are different in the present representation from those in Plate I. In the present reproduction, peacocks and snakes are entangled with one another as also in tree branches.

Dehin actually provided a vast scope for the free-play of the doings of artist's imaginative creations.

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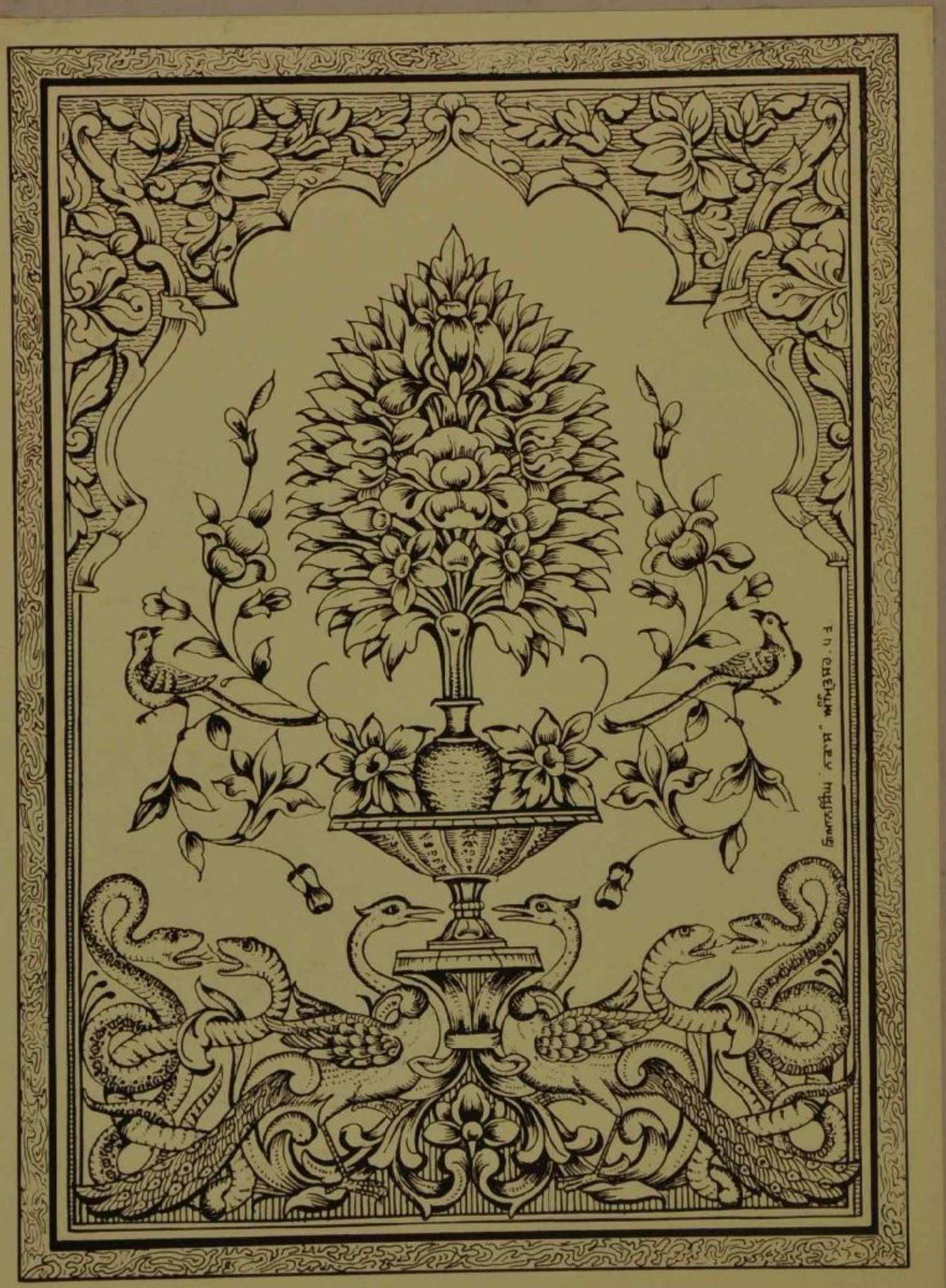

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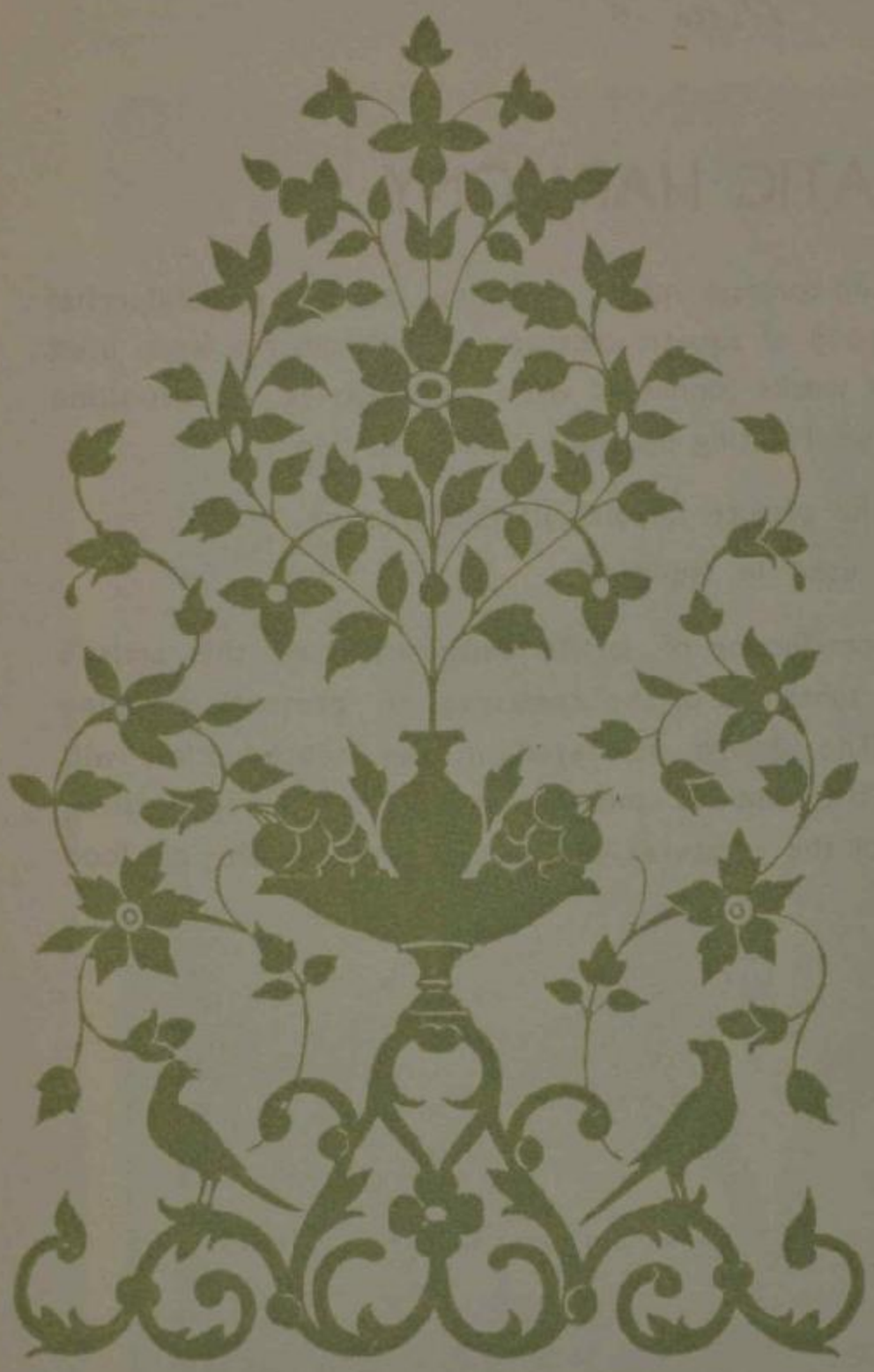

AQUATIC HARMONY

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Plate 5

AQUATIC HARMONY

A fine setting of fish-and-tortoise motif, bringing out in graceful relief the charm of the group of aquatic creatures. Such designs were used for the execution of works connected with the in-laying of cut-stone in marble as well as with Fresco-Painting on walls, roofs and floors.

The colour-scheme of the picture is particularly attractive.

Such designs were also used in 'squares'.

These designs are the production of fertile imagination of the artist's mind, subjecting the physical subtlaties of the creatures to present charming motifs æsthetically perfect. The design portrayed in the reproduction will re-call to the reader's mind the anxious movements, ultimately culminating in the converging assemblage of the creatures on seeing some article of food or other attractive subject.

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SAMADHI

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Plate 6

SAMADHI

A rare mental state in Indian metaphysics, Samadhi is a means which brings about the union between the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

In the opposite picture is shown a sage in similar state of mind. His eye-brows have over-grown and have almost covered his eyes. Due to years of in-attention to his person, un-usually lengthy hair have grown on his limbs. Due to lack of physical movements in his body, the deer is taking it as an inert thing and is scratching its sides against it. The austere penance has created an atmosphere of love and non-violence among wild creatures : the tiger and the deer, the snake and the squirrel — all are getting on well with one another at the same spot.

Disturbing influences, like the flesh-carrying vulture, the stormy air (waving the sage's beard) and the noisy water-fall, have little effect on the concentrated soul. The sage's personality though inert, is disseminating an atmosphere of universal love and tolerance, and establishes the essential one-ness of all creatures.

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ELEPHANT FIGHT

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Plate 7

ELEPHANT FIGHT

THE peculiar feminine character in relishing the fight between two rivals is finely portrayed. Each one of the opponents, in an effort to win over the she - elephant, is trying to inflict fatal blows on the other, whereas she is smiling at their folly, since — as is clear from what has already happened to the males, neither may survive to have the darling of his desires.

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FLOWER PATTERNS

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Plate 8

FLOWER PATTERNS

THESE are two specimens of Flowers after the Naqqashi School. The yellow flower is the Sosan and the red one is Post (Poppy) or Lalla.

Such flower patterns were used for instructional purposes for beginners in the Naqqashi School. These were a stepping stone towards the execution of the ultimate Dehins and other designs involving intricate motifs.

These flower patterns were not an exact copy of natural items, but they were the crystallizations of the Artist's own imagination, inspired by a deep study of natural forms. These natural forms were ultimately moulded and transliterated in his own language, giving harmonized symphony to his subjects.

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PATTHA

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Plate 9

PATTHA

PATTHA is a decorative border design used around the Dehin and other styles. It is depicted through creeper, bird animal and other motifs in various colours. Such styles are generally after the Naqqashi School and do not conform to natural patterns. Symmetry of forms is the key-note of such style.

These decorative designs catered for the æsthetic and cultural values that sweetened home-life.

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DEHIN JARATKARI

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DEHIN JARATKARI

THIS is another style of Dehin–work, showing the charming effect of in – laying of coloured cut-stone in marble. This type of work can be seen in sufficient relief on the outer walls of the main shrine in the Golden Temple, Amritsar and other historical monuments.

It requires particular care in handling tender pieces of stone while fitting them in the panels, and demands a keen sense of geometrical symmetry.

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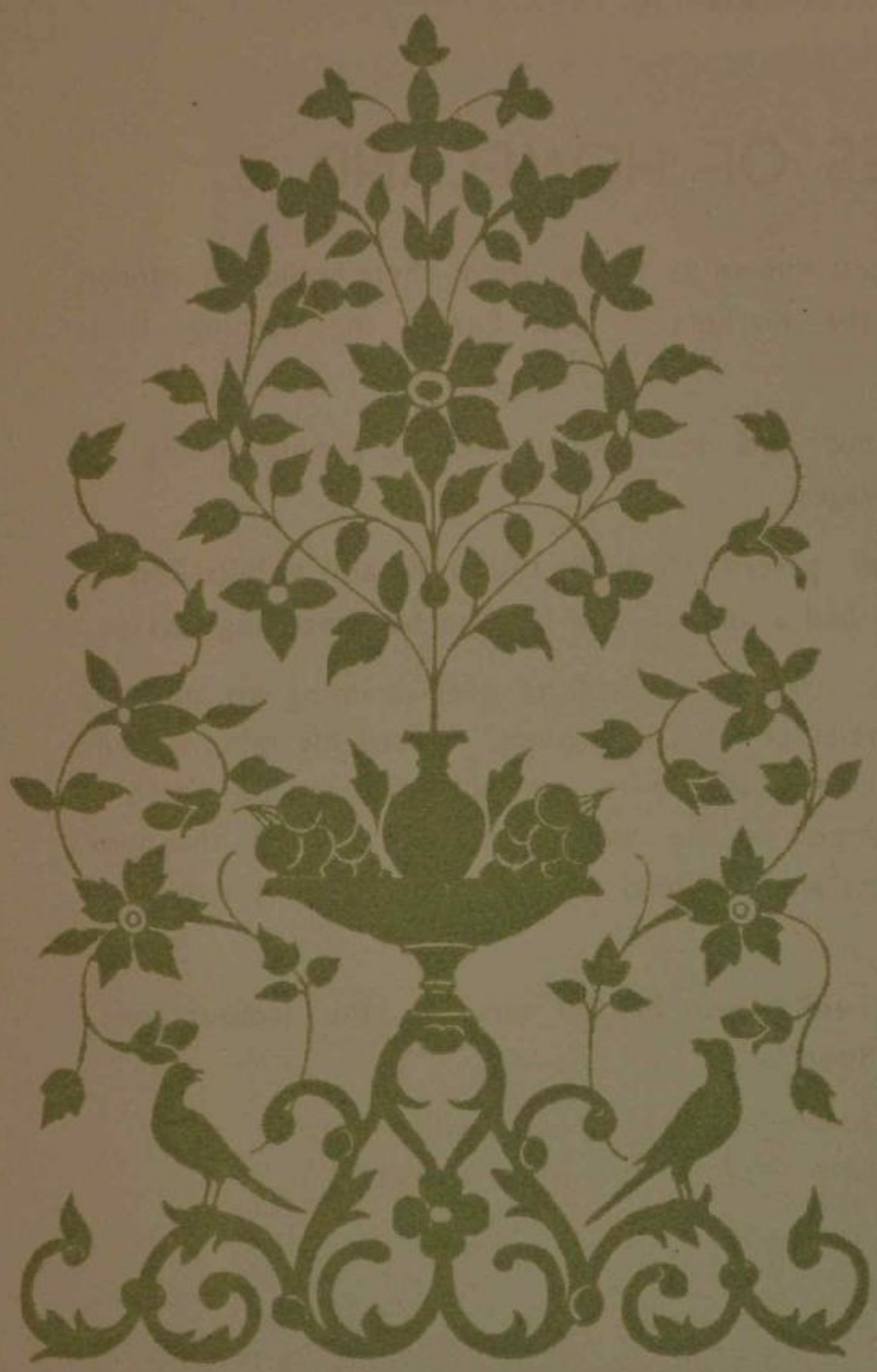

MEMORIES OF HOMELAND

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Plate II

MEMORIES OF HOMELAND

KASHMIRI labourers, known as Hatos, leave their homes in winter, and almost flood the markets in the Punjab for earning their livelihood.

They are a very industrious and scrupulously honest people—living on their hard-earned and meagre wages.

The artist, having himself passed through the trials and tribulations of life common to all true artists, had a special love for the hard-working classes.

The picture shows a Hato, tired as a result of over-straining his muscles, having a bit of rest. At this particular moment, comes, before his mind's eye, the sweet picture of his homeland Kashmir—a veritable heaven on Earth ! Human suffering is visibly stamped on the weather-beaten face of the poor man ! His agonised face depicts an emotional crisis born out of his wrenched separation from home.

This is a depiction of the well-known Punjabi verse by the famous poet, the late Giani Harinder Singh "Roop" :

"Tabbar chhadia watan bhulaiya par bhukh pichha kita,
Mera joban es kuhare mulon hi wadh leeta !"

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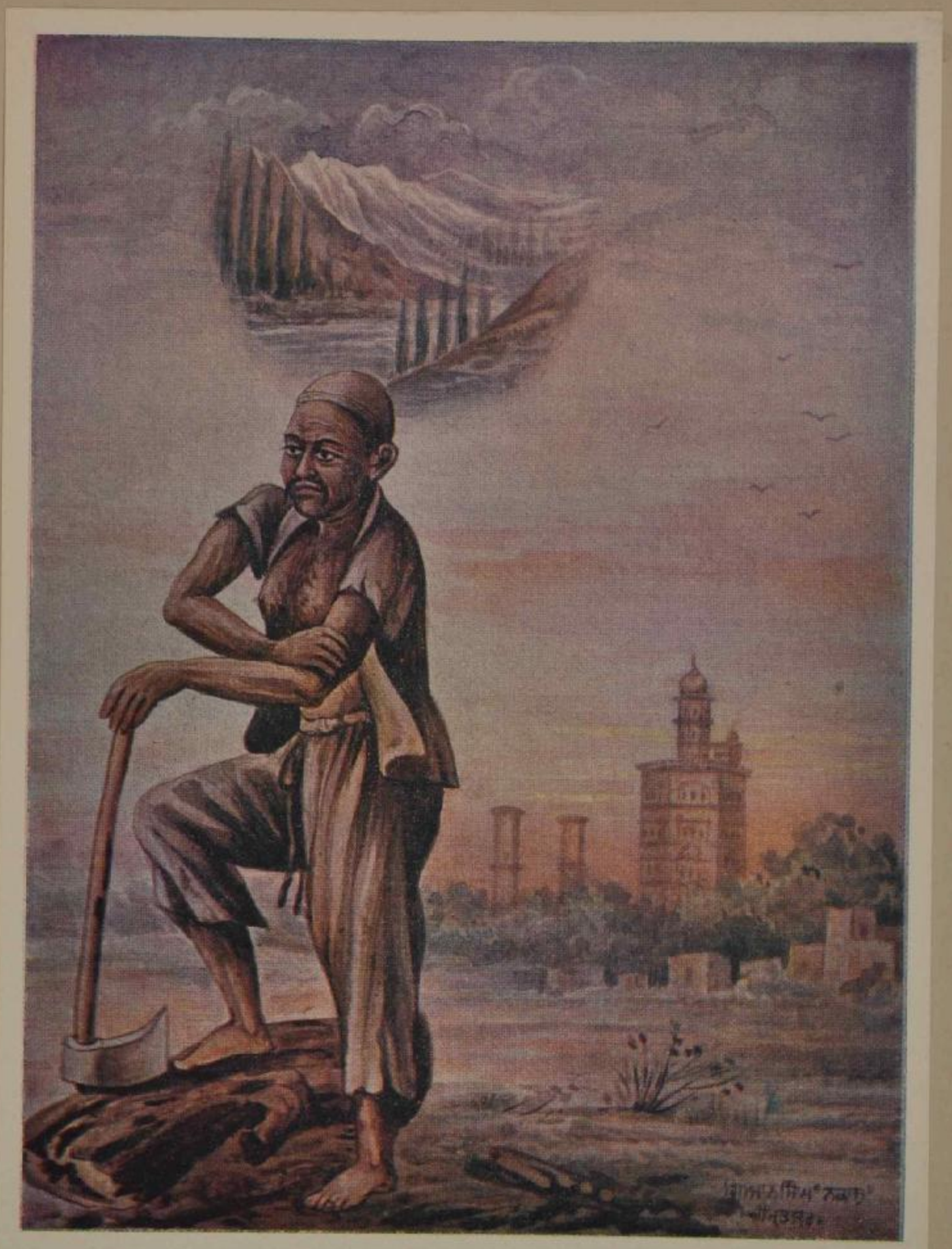

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DEHIN TUKRI

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Plate 12

DEHIN TUKRI

THIS is a specimen of coloured cut-stone work in Gach (Plaster of Paris). The design is executed in creeper, flower and bird motif.

Tukri work is a charming device for interior home-decoration. It can be seen in old historical monuments, religious buildings etc. Details of technique are explained in the note on "The Technique of Fresco-Painting" preceding the Plates.

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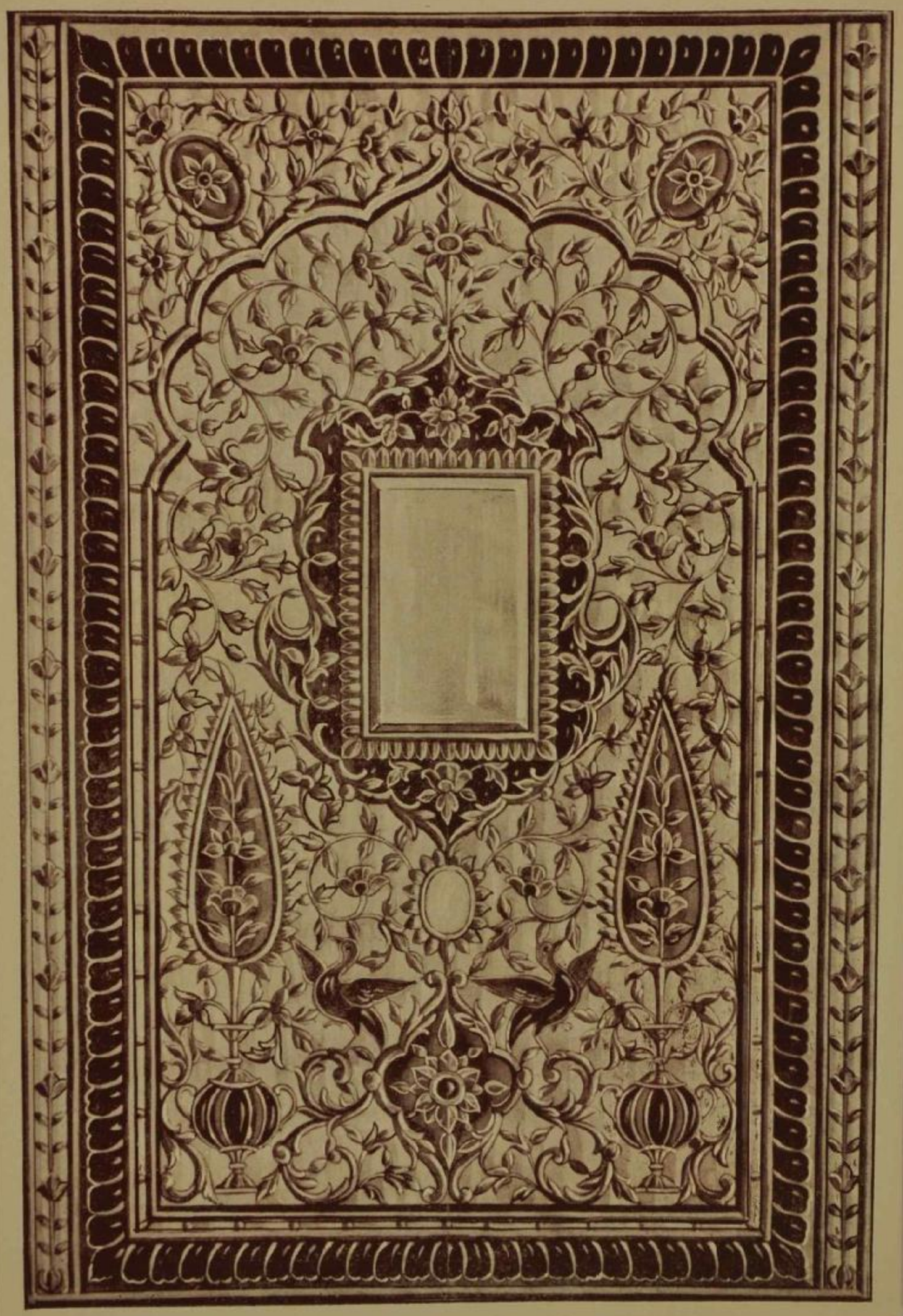

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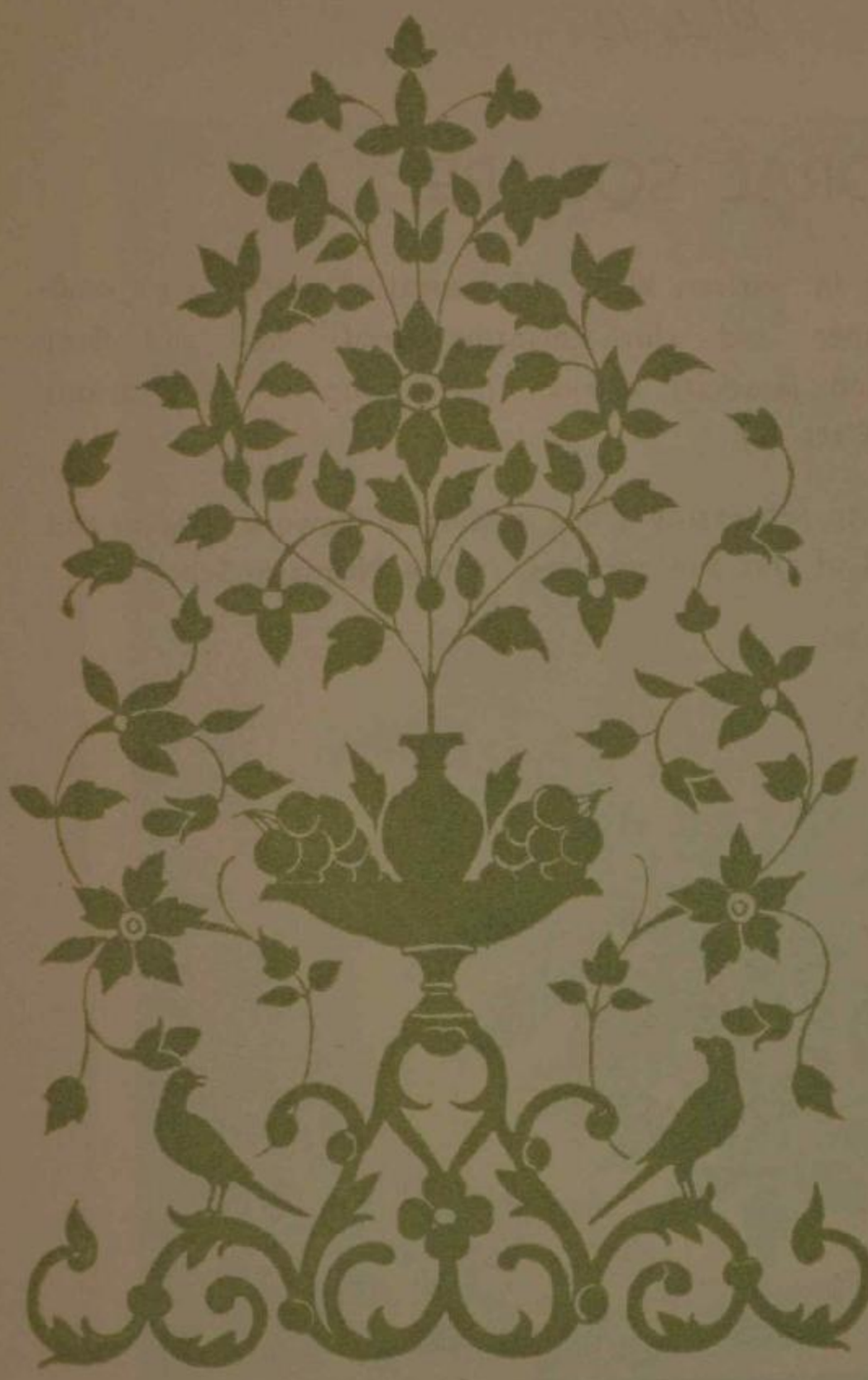

FLORAL SQUARE

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Plate 13

FLORAL SQUARE

A buoyant design used in various kinds of decorative work, e.g. embroidry, Rangoli, paper and cloth printing; roof, wall and floor decoration, Tukri and Jaratkari work. This is one of the various styles of square motifs (c. f. Plate 5).

The reproduction opposite represents a fine setting of flowers, leaves and creeper against the background of arcs and cornices, in the Naqqashi School.

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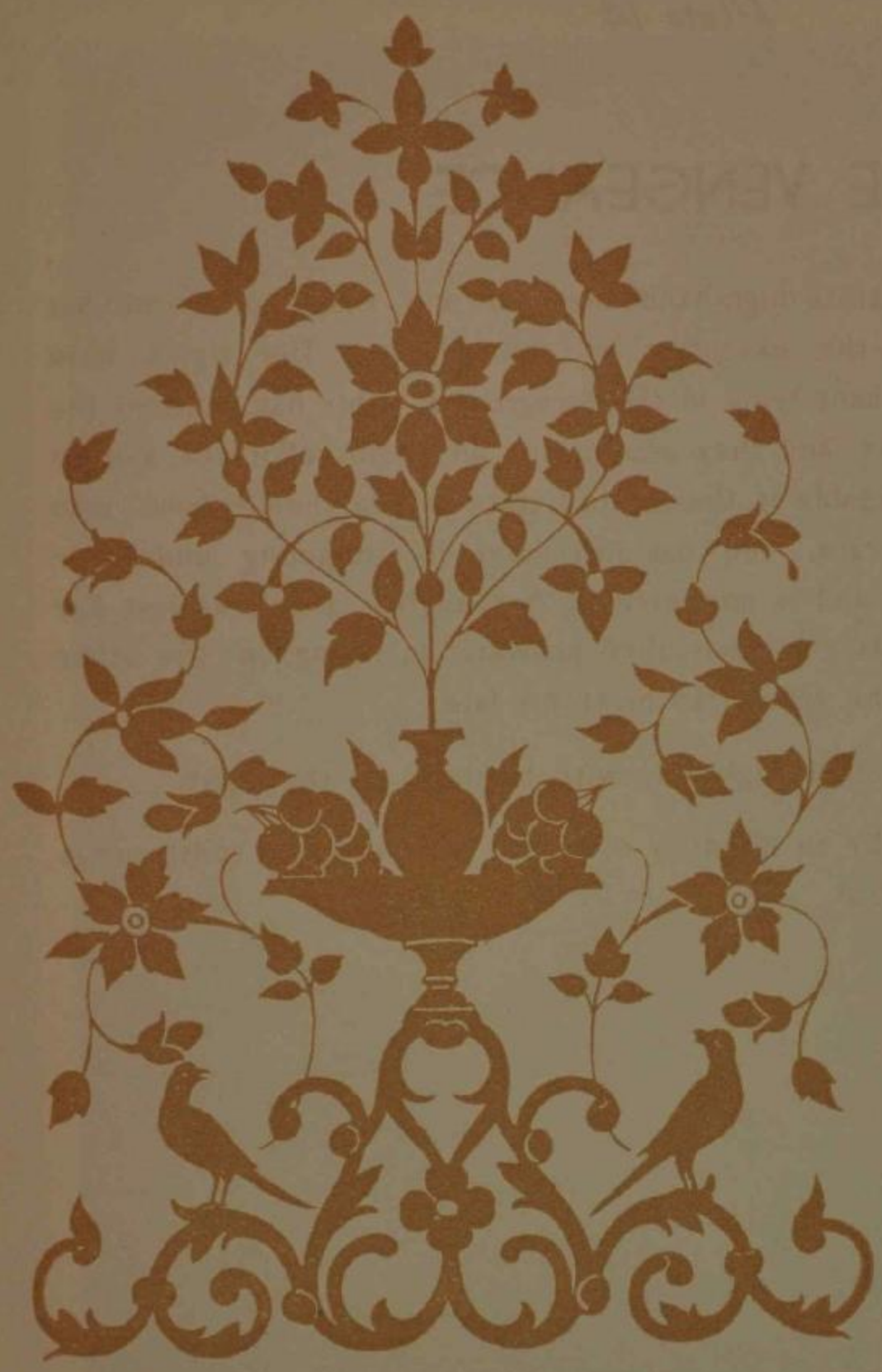

THE VENGEANCE

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Plate 14

THE VENGEANCE

REFUSAL to tolerate high-handedness in any shape or form has found a free-play in the execution of this picture. The tigers have killed the child-elephant lying in the foreground. This has touched the finer sensibilities of its parents, and they are making an all-out effort to avenge the tyranny. Particulary noticeable is the excited state of the she-elephant, who is atonce aggrieved and desperate. She has succeeded in trampling under her feet one of the wrong-doers, and is now striking her mighty trunk against her victim. The he-elephant displays his masculine prowess in lifting up the other tiger before dashing him to the ground to meet his fate.

A pair of mild snakes clings frightfully with bamboos on the right.

The picture is marked by an intensity of feeling and depicts a conspicuous moment in the life of the forest.

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THE PILGRIM

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Plate 15

THE PILGRIM

THE Path of Life is indeed a difficult one. From all sides, an average human being is surrounded by difficulties for a bare existence. His journey is thwarted by stormy obstacles, gaping misfortunes and rushing floods of unfavourable circumstances.

The man of determination, however, plans his course of action, and, irrespective of his difficulties, follows the path he has once chosen after intensive deliberations and ultimately succeeds in attaining his goal.

The idea has been very honestly portrayed by the artist, who has depicted the obstacles in the form of tempest and other ravages of nature, and has, at the same time, retained the sturdy personality of the man facing the difficulties with courage and perseverance.

The picture symbolises the onward march of humanity towards its destined goal notwithstanding the buffets that thwart its progress.

This is the depiction of the verse :
(*"Kuriye kuriye vaidiya..."*), from the Holy Guru Granth Sahib.

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GHARVANJH
(BASE)

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Plate 16

GHARVANJH

(BASE)

GHARVANJH is the base of a Dehin. This is also a decorative device involving knotted grapples between animals, balanced by similar style of floral patterns. Drawing needs to be exceptionally strong in the depiction of such subjects.

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THE ETERNAL STRIFE

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Plate 17

THE ETERNAL STRIFE

AN allegorical representation of the everlasting struggle between Good and Evil. The vile forces, in their brute physical majority are always on the look out for over-throwing the saner elements by all sorts of foul means. The individual, or society, giving way, or resorting, to ignoble manoeuvres, is bound to suffer a defeating impact in the long run, provided, of course, that the righteous and the straight–forward have the will and capacity to face such activities with firmness and courage.

Legend has it that the Devas (the gods) were once routed and stripped off their attributes by the Asuras (demons). With a view to regain their lost prowess, the Devas approached Bhagwati Durga (Shakti), the dauntless Goddess of Warfare. The Goddess gave a pitched encounter to the demons, and destroyed their armies in large numbers. At the time their defeat was almost complete, the demons, under the leadership of their mightiest general, Sranvat Beej, gave a counter-attack to the Devas. This new leader was almost invulnerable in as much as, by virtue of a boon earned by him, all the drops of blood falling from his person, gave birth to as many demons of a fierce type. Under these conditions, the Goddess created "Kalika"— (out of her own fore-head) —who sipped in any drops of blood falling from the demon-general's body before they reached the ground. It was then a child's play for Goddess Durga to slay the demon leader.

The painting honestly explains the following verse in "Chandi Di Var" from Dasam Granth of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib :

(*"Nikli Matha Phore Kai....."*)

The fight between good and evil is eternally going on in man and society. The righteous spirit represents the Devas (*Satva-guna*), the evil spirit symbolises the Asuras (*Tamo-guna*). Durga is the leading intelligence in humans, and Kalika is the ultimate decisive acumen enabling the humans to curb the might of evil forces.

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FLOWER - VASE

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Plate 18

FLOWER – VASE

A fine specimen of colour composition in animal and flower painting. The expression of peculiar movements in the bodies of the fish has been brought out in æsthetic relief to fashion out the flower-vase. The huge flower on the top, with tender leaves shooting out, affords an appropriate balance to the group of curling fish below.

Such flower-vases can also be executed in other motifs, viz : elephant, tiger, snake, stork etc. and afford considerable delicacy to the finished pattern.

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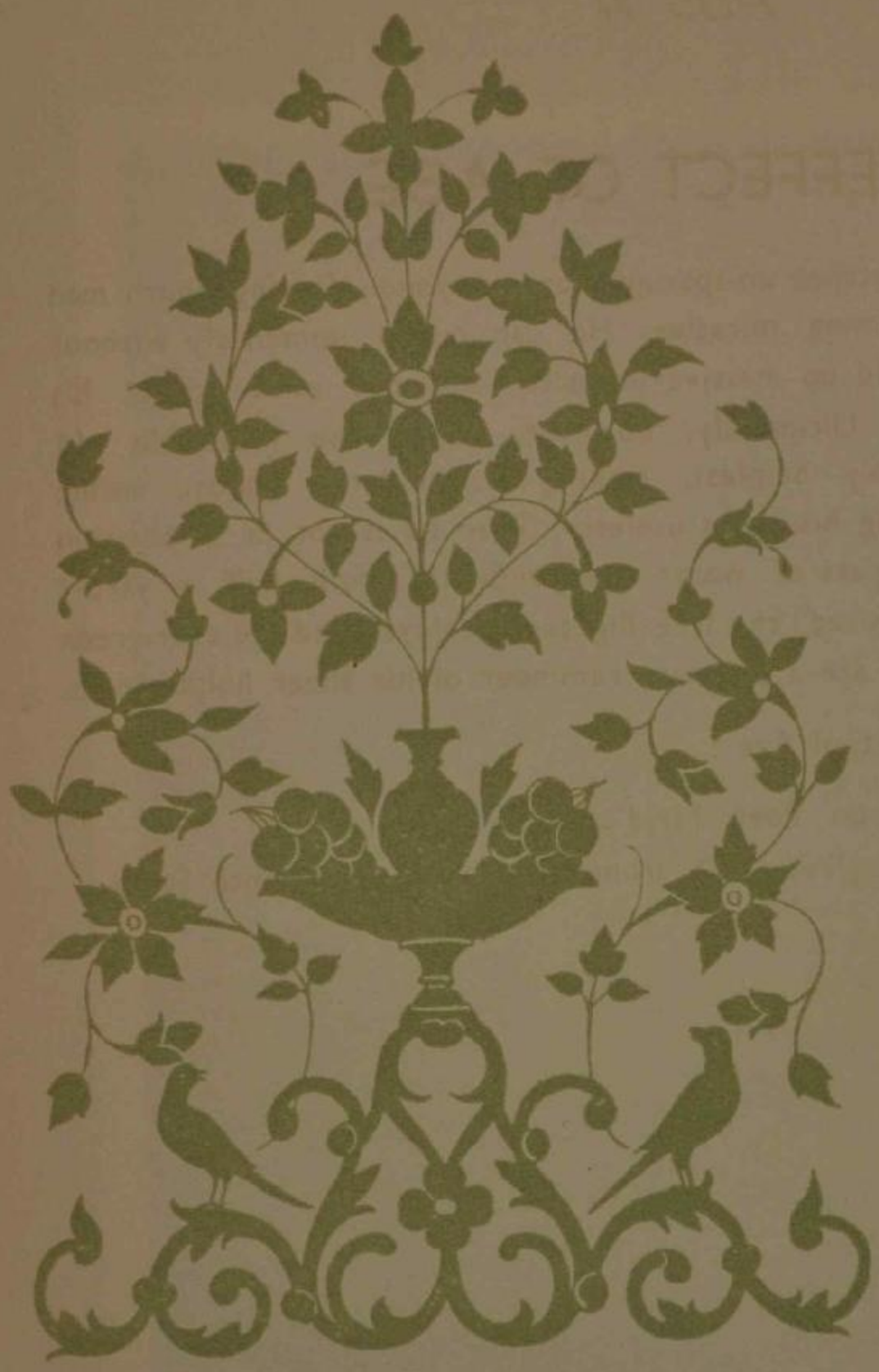

THE EFFECT OF AGE

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Plate 19

THE EFFECT OF AGE

AGE lays its icy clutches un-sparingly on everyone. During youth man is capable of performing miracles. He can travel immensely without fatigue, he can build up massive projects, and can even rocket his may into the other planets. Ultimately, however, comes the inevitable old age, rendering him obsolutely helpless, making his skeleton almost visible through his skin and rendering his limbs useless ! Then he is not in a position to help himself even with a glass of water independently from half a yard ! The scenic beauties he had visited, the free flights he enjoyed and the ever-green aspects of nature round-about are a poignant reminder of his sheer helplessness.

Such indeed is the effect of Age !

The picture is based on Poet Farid's verse :
(*"Farida, inni nikki janghiaye..."*), from the Holy Guru Granth Sahib.

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ਕਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ "ਨਰਾਸ"
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ੨੮-੪-੪੨

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CAMEL FIGHT

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Plate 20

CAMEL FIGHT

LIFE is struggle – be it in men or animals. Some time or the other, occasions do come in the day-to-day working of every creature, when he finds himself faced with some problem or the other, and it is then time for him to rise to the occasion and handle the situation with courage and fortitude.

The picture shows two camels engaged in a "pitched battle" with each other : in a desparate attempt to one-throw the other. Particularly noticeable is the execution of the grapple by employing all the limbs of thə bodies (fore and hind legs, necks and mouths etc.) of the beasts, to give the occasion a touch of reality. The two animals appear to have come out of the main caravan (in the background) to test their prowess on each other to fight for 'respective rights'. The onsloughts on each other are so quick and mighty, that clouds of sand are set flying by continuous thumping of the ground.

(The original painting is in collection of S. Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Speaker, Punjab Assembly).

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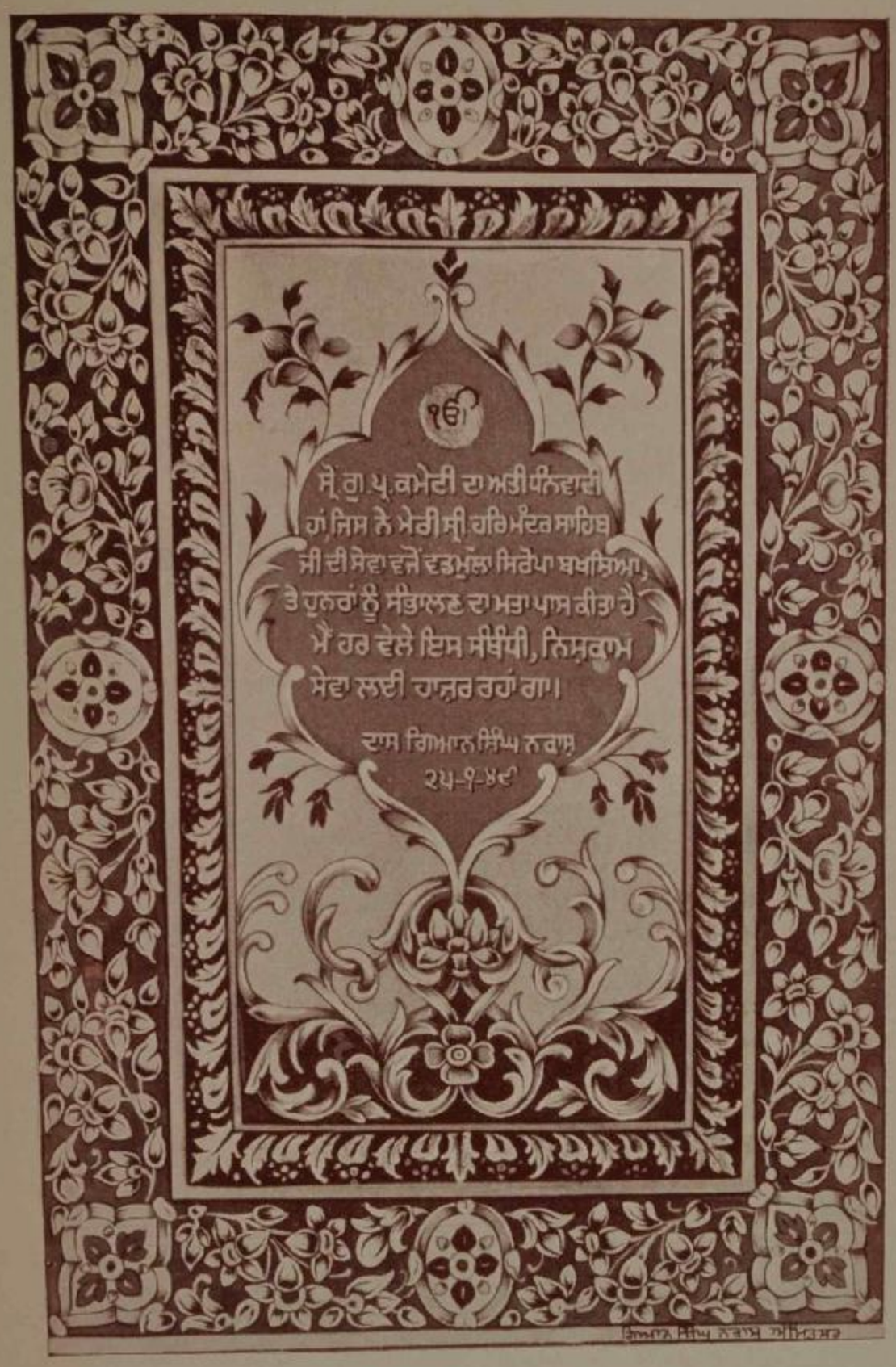
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ਸੋ. ਰੁ. ਪ੍ਰ. ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਅਤੀ ਧੰਨਵਾਦੀ
ਹਾਂ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿ ਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ
ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਡਮੁੱਲਾ ਸਿਰੋਪਾ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਆ,
ਤੇ ਹੁਨਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਭਾਲਣ ਦਾ ਮਤਾ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ
ਮੈਂ ਹਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ, ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ
ਸੇਵਾ ਲਈ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਰਹਾਂ ਗਾ।

ਦਾਸ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਰਾਸ਼
੨੫-੭-੪੯

A reproduction of the thanks-giving letter, sent by the late Bhai Gian Singh to Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, when they conferred on him the rare grant of a Siropa in the year 1949, in recognition of his meritorious services in Art at the Golden Temple, Amritsar.

This letter is hung in the Teja Singh Hall, Amritsar.

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ERRATA

Under Acknowledgements, for "Pagant" in line 5 of para 1, read "Pageant".
Under The Artist, for "wno" in line 4 of para 1, read "who". And for "field" in the last line of the page read "fields".
Under Other Allied Arts, in line 2 of sub-para under Tukri Work, for "an" read "on".
Under Plate 1, para 1, read "buildings" for "buidings", in the last line.
Under Plate 5, for "subtlaties" in line 2 of last para read "subtleties".
Under Plate 14, for "Particulary" in line 5 of para 1, read "Particularly". And in sub-para 2, for "mild" read "wild".
Under Plate 15, in last line for "Vaidiya" read "Vaindiya".
Under Plate 19, in line 4, para 1, read "way" for "may". And in line 5 read "absolutely" for "obsolutely".
Under Plate 20, in line 2, para 2, read "over-throw" for "one-throw". In the first line within brackets in last para, read "the" between "in" and "collection".

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